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WASHINGTON, DC- U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon voted today to reauthorize the landmark Voting Rights Act (H.R. 9), citing the need to ensure the right to vote is fully protected. The Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization Act of 2006 extends for 25 years the Voting Rights Act, which was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on August 6, 1965. The reauthorization passed by a vote of 390 to 33.

**"The Voting Rights Act has played a key role in guaranteeing the right to vote for African Americans and other minorities who have suffered under segregation and oppression,"** said Melancon. **"As someone who can remember the dark days of literacy tests and poll taxes, I proudly voted today to extend this landmark civil rights legislation."**

Enacted in 1965, and expanded in 1975, the Voting Rights Act provided extensive protection to minority communities by prohibiting any voting practice that would abridge the right to vote on the basis of race. Any "test or device" for registering or voting was forbidden, effectively abolishing poll taxes and literacy tests.

The success of the Voting Rights Amendment has led to significant political achievement and greater minority representation at all levels of government. According to the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, today there are more than 9,100 African American and 6,000 Latino elected officials across the country and the number of Asian Americans holding elected office has tripled.

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